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THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE «KRIMS» ROMANI ETHNIC GROUP (BASED ON THE RESULTS OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION RESEARCH)

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Summary: This article is devoted to the study of the “Krimis” Gypsy subethnic group. Krimis' cultural features, routine practices and patterns of behavior of its representatives are analyzed.

Key words: the «Krimis», routine practices, sociocultural features, the Gypsy subethnic group.

Анотація: Стаття присвячена вивченню соціокультурних особливостей циганського субетносу «Крими». Проаналізовано повсякденні практики та моделі поведінки його представників.

Ключові слова: «Крими», рутинні практики, соціокультурні особливості, циганський субетнос.

Аннотация: Статья посвящена изучению социокультурных особенностей цыганского субэтноса «Крымы». Произведен анализ повседневных практик и моделей поведения его представителей.

Ключевые слова: «Крымы», рутинные практики, социокультурные особенности, цыганский субэтнос.

The Gypsy ethnos is not homogeneous. It is represented by a variety of subethnic groups which differ in their origin, language, traditions, religion and other cultural features [7, 8, 10]. This article is devoted to the study of sociocultural features of the Gypsy subethnic group. The ethnonim «Krimis» stems from the Crimea – the place of their original establishment, where the Krimis might have settled in the early 17th century [10]. There they adopted Islam. Since then their language and traditions have been experiencing great influence of Tatarian culture [2]. After the Crimean Peninsula was annexed to the Russian Empire the Krimis were progressively dispersed into Russia and then to the countries of the USSR.

The research design

The problem of the research focuses on dominating of negative treatment, based on stereotypes towards the Gypsy subethnic groups in a contemporary Ukrainian society. The subject is the representatives of the «Krimis» Gypsy subethnic group living on the territory of Kharkiv and Kharkiv region. The object of the research is the routine practices of the representatives of the «Krimis» ethnic group who live in Kharkiv and Kharkiv region. The aim of the research is to analyze the social structure, routine practices and patterns of behavior of the Krimis. Preliminary hypothesis: the Krimis communities are dominated by negative treatment to Slavic population of Ukraine brought about by religious differences. The method of obtaining data is ethnographic [5, 6]. The main sources of information include participant observation, informal interviews and biographical interviews.

Gender roles of the Krims community

In the Krims community the financial support of the family is traditionally provided by the male dimension. Female representatives of the community have the right to work but according to their preferences. Their usual charge is housework (cooking, cleaning, and bringing up children). However, traditionally female responsibilities can be shared by male representatives [9]. Despite the fact that family violence is not considered as deviational behavior it is mostly perceived negatively [1, 2]. Such a phenomenon is presented in several families. Female adultery is strongly forbidden. However, male adultery is rather spread though disapproved by the community.

The social status of a woman depends on a period of living in a marriage. For example, a woman who lives in a marriage over 5 years has the right to appear with her husband on holidays (usually men and women sit separately on holidays if there are representatives of more than one family). Female representatives of the Krims community do not seek for a gender equality; feministic tendencies are not relevant to them. Marriage with the Slavic representatives is widely spread among male Krims whereas it is forbidden for female Krims. In their interview female Krims accept that they do not consider a Slavic man “gadje” (the term is used by the Gypsy people for signification of non-Gypsy population) as a possible spouse. Marriage with the representatives of other Gypsy subethnic groups is allowed among male Krims, and prohibited among female Krims, it is considered to treat such a marriage as unacceptable. Despite that, the observation revealed mixed marriages between a female Krim and a male representative of other Gypsy subethnic group. By interviewing female Krims it was found out that such relations are not allowed by the community and, are in fact, considered as deviation and custom breaking. Nevertheless, the punitive sanctions are not strict and the violator's status will gain its legitimacy in a few years. The marriage age has considerably increased (from 15-19 to 24 years). The selection of a partner is usually rationally motivated.

The social structure

There is a strict status hierarchy in the Krims community grounded on the age and gender indications. The most significant indication is age. The decisions of the oldest members of community (or a local family) are considered as strict laws. The highest social status in the Krims family belongs to the eldest man of a family; the lowest – to the youngest daughter in law. However, the strict community laws are frequently dominated by personal attitudes (for example, the daughters-in-law can be accepted by a family as equal in their rights). The principles of unity and solidarity are the key principles of the Krims community. Thus, the Gypsy identity is more significant for the members than the Krims identity. Devotion and mutual assistance for the community are highly valuable.

The results of the research have shown that the Krims are mostly tolerant and objective in their treatment towards «gadje» and the representatives of other Gypsy subethnic groups. The individual's nationality is less meaningful than personal characteristics.



The representatives of other Gypsy subethnic groups as well as «gadje» can be accepted to the Krims community not only as a member by marriage but also with a «friend» status. The status of a «family friend» is perceived by the community as very responsible and honorable. *Pic.1. The national clothes of female Krims*

This status could be given to an individual by the Krims community on the grounds of his/her moral principles and patterns of behavior. Individuals who are given such a status become advantaged by a high level of confidence, opportunity to study the Krims dialect of the Gypsy language; also they are given the right to get assistance in difficult circumstances. The same is expected of the individuals with a «friend» status. In case of losing the status it can never be reclaimed. In contrast, the demands to individuals integrated to the community by marriage are higher than to friends. Despite their different national or cultural origin the family members must obey all the rules (even the clothes style (see pic.1)).

The common perception of other Gypsy subethnic groups by the Krims is not homogeneous, however very simplistic and stereotyped but not utterly negative. Generally, the attitude is either positive due to a number of cultural similarities or neutral.

Education

The level of education of the Krims community is rather low. Getting education is widely spread among male representatives (5-11 school grades). That provides them with enough skills for being employed in a commercial sector. The female representatives of the Krims community are mostly illiterate. This fact is determined by subjective factors such as their value system and personal preferences. But there has been observed a positive tendency of increasing the educational level in the Krims community. The education has become not only a necessity but also a value.

The outcome:

The preliminary hypothesis «The Krims communities are dominated by a negative treatment to the Slavic population of Ukraine brought about by religious differences» is refuted. The results of the research indicated that the treatment to the representatives of other subethnic groups is mostly based on personal characteristics of an individual. The perception of the Slavic people by the Krims

community can be classified as neutral. The main hamper to a successful integration of the Krims into a contemporary Ukrainian society is a great social discrepancy between the Krims and the national majority of Ukraine caused by the fear of assimilation.

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